DEMOCRATIC

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MORE TROOPS QUIT

Forty Thousand Soviet Soldiers Go Home

A large portion of the Soviet troops stationed in the German Democratic Republic are to be withdrawn and demobilised in the immediate future, the Soviet Government announced on January 6th.

The announcement said that the overall figure of the Soviet forces would be reduced immediately by 300,000 men. 41,000 of this total would be withdrawn from East Germany, and 17,000 from Hungary.

The official statement said that this step had been taken as a contribution to the general relaxation of tension, and in order to contribute to an atmosphere of trust. "It is hoped that this act of good will may set an example for other states, particularly USA, Britain and France, the leading powers in NATO" the statement added.

The new withdrawals mean that the Soviet troops stationed in the German Democratic Republic will have been reduced by a total of 84,500 men, or 84 complete battalions in the past few years. In 1955, 20,000 Soviet troops were sent home and demobilised, and in 1956 a further 33,500 troops went home. Altogether the total strength of the Soviet Army has been reduced by 1,840,000 men since 1955, when the first big cut in the forces was made.

It will be recalled that the Soviet Union has repeatedly offered to withdraw all Soviet troops from East Germany if the Western Powers would withdraw all their troops from West Germany. Hitherto all such offers have been rejected by the west.

5 YEAR PLAN BECOMES LAW

The Second Five Year Plan of the German Democratic Republic, which lays down the broad lines of development in all branches of industry, agriculture and other fields, became law on January 9th, when it was officially confirmed by the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic.

The plan covers the years 1956 to 1960: the delay in the passage of the plan law in its final form is ascribed to various re-assessments, and to the necessity for reaching full co-ordination with the other socialist countries. The fact that the Five Year Plan has only just become law does not mean, of course, that for the past two years the development of Democratic Germany has been proceeding in an unplanned fashion: the Five Year Plan is the big overall strategic plan of development, but year to year progress has been governed by the annual plans which have gone into effect on their normal target dates.

Announcing the details of the Second Five Year Plan to the members of the People's Chamber, the Chairman of the State Planning Commission outlined the four basic problems of economic development in the German Democratic Republic in the construction of socialism. The basic tasks were as follows:

1. Priority development of basic industries, particularly coal, power production, chemicals and building materials. This must be done in order to broaden the basis of home-produced raw materials, and to remove as far as possible the disproportion between home raw materials and the requirements of industry.

2. The improvement of industrial technique, and the use of investment sums for further mechanisation and automation, in order to ensure a steady rise in productivity.

3. A considerable increase in agricultural production, in order to satisfy to a growing degree from home grown products the consumer demand for meat, animal fats and milk.

(cont. on next page)

WHAT IS THE RAPACKI PLAN? See Inside

(cont. from preceding page)

4. A speed-up in housing construction, and a considerable increase in the production of consumer goods, to ensure a rising standard of living for the working people.

Here are further details of the targets of the Second Five Year Plan, as presented in the report of the State Planning Commission:

Fifth in Europe

The German Democratic Republic today occupies fifth place in total industrial production amongst the states of Europe. Its production of soft coal, well over 200 million tons annually, is the greatest in the world, and by 1960 production is scheduled to rise to 244 million tons. Amongst the family of socialist states, Democratic Germany occupies second place in the production of electric power, machine tools, and many chemicals, being outranked only by the Soviet Union with a population more than ten times as great.

Nearly Forty Percent Production Rise

Industrial production in Democratic Germany is scheduled to rise by 38 % during the years 1955—60, the term of the Second Five Year Plan. In 1955 gross annual industrial production was valued at 46 thousand million marks: in 1958 it will reach over 56 thousand million marks; and the target for 1960, which experts are confident can be reached, is 63 thousand million marks. The production increase over the five-year period will be equal to the entire production for 1957 in the coal, power, foundry, chemical and heavy engineering industries.

Power Production: Leading in Europe

A highly industrialised country like Democratic Germany needs huge supplies of electric power, and this is at present one of the bottlenecks to general production increases. By 1955 East Germany was one of the leading countries in Europe in the production of electric power per head (Democratic Germany, 1610 kilowatts, Britain 1600 kilowatts, France 1060 kilowatts, Italy 784 kilowatts). This year, power production per head will rise to 1970 kilowatts, and by 1960 will be increased to 2340 kilowatts. This will mean that for the first time the opening up of new power resources will have outdistanced the rise in general industrial production, and should make it possible to end load-shedding in industry at peak hours.

More Tractors

The vehicle industry will provide about 10,000 new tractors for the machine tractor hire stations during the coming three years, and there will be a big upswing in the output of other agricultural machinery to aid the mechanisation of the countryside. 700 potato harvesters will be made this year, and by 1960 annual production will have risen to 3000: the production of sugar-beet harvesters will rise from 1000 in 1958 to 2000 in 1960. At present Democratic Germany depends on imports for 20 % of its animal fat and 16 % of its meat. These figures will be radically cut by 1960 by means of increasing home production, and by 1965 it is hoped to cover all consumer demands for these goods without the aid of imports.

Exports and Imports

Exports are planned to be 64 % over the 1955 figure by 1960, and this will make possible the import of larger quantities of badly needed raw materials and consumer goods. Imports of rolling steel and copper will be doubled: imports of high-grade cotton will be trebled, and imports of wool and leather doubled.

Housing

A total of 315,000 new housing units are scheduled for completion between 1956 and 1960, and increasing industrialisation of the building industry is aimed at making an annual building rate of 100,000 new homes every year possible by 1960. In order to ensure rational building, the average usable floor area of new flats has been fixed at about 65 square yards: this compares to a European average of 57 square yards and a West German average of 51 square yards.

E. GERMAN SKIER TOPS LIST

East German ski-jumper Helmut Recknagel beat the best jumpers of Europe to take first place in the "four-jump" contest held on four ski-jumps in West Germany and Austria at the end of December and beginning of January. Another jumper from Democratic Germany, Werner Lesser, took fourth place in the contest. Second and third place were taken by Soviet jumpers. Competitors from Austria, West Germany and Sweden, who have previously predominated in this sport, finished among the also-rans.

Footnote: West German newspapers generally refer slightingly to the standards and achievements attained by athletes from Democratic Germany, referring to them deprecatingly as "Soviet Zone competitors". The surprise win by Helmut Recknagel earned him headlines on the sports pages of the West German press: he was described simply as "leading German ski-jumper", and only an attentive reader with a good knowledge of geography could discover that he was representing the German Democratic Republic, since most of these newspaper reports mentioned only the name of his home village, without explaining that it lay in Democratic Germany.

Anti-Semitic Teacher Suspended

Public opinion in West Germany has finally forced Offenburg school authorities to suspend a grammar school teacher who announced publicly early last year that he thought that Hitler had gassed too few Jews.

The teacher, Ludwig Zind, made this and other anti-Semitic statements in a conversation with a German Jewish textile merchant in a bar. He added: "I am proud of the fact that during the war I, together with my men, broke the necks of hundreds of Jews with spades."

The Jewish merchant attempted to get the educational authorities to take action against the teacher, but was unsuccessful until the West German news magazine "Spiegel" made the facts public on December 16th. Following this publication the educational authorities were forced to suspend the teacher, who will come before a disciplinary court on January 27th.

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE RAPACKI PLAN

The "Rapacki Plan" for an atom-free zone in central Europe, comprising as a minimum Poland, Czechoslovakia and both East and West Germany, is receiving increasing attention in the capitals of Europe and America. Already the publicity given to the plan has assured Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki (pronounced Ra-patski) of a place in the history books alongside other statesmen such as Lord Curzon, famed as the originator of the "Curzon Line" and President Monroe of the "Monroe Doctrine".

Here is a short summary of what the plan is, and how it came to be enunciated:

July 27th 1957: Otto Grotewohl, Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, tabled a plan calling for the conclusion of an agreement between the East and West German states banning the stationing or manufacture of atomic bombs and weapons on German territory. At this stage the plan was coupled with the proposal that the two German states should leave NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The proposal was rejected out of hand by the West German Government.

October 2nd 1957: Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki made the following proposal to the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York:

"The Government of the Polish People's Republic declares that should the two German states express their consent to put into effect the prohibition of production and stockpiling of atomic and thermonuclear weapons on their territories, the Polish People's Republic is prepared simultaneously to take the same action on her own territory."

Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Vaclav David gave full support to the Polish offer, and announced that Czechoslovakia would also renounce nuclear weapons if West and East Germany did the same.

October 5th 1957: Lothar Bolz, Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, notified the United Nations that Democratic Germany was ready and willing to negotiate with the West German Government on the subject.

December 11th 1957: The People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic proposed once again that East and West Germany should renounce atomic bombs and rockets, and that West Germany should prevail upon the western allies to remove such weapons already stationed in West Germany. The proposal suggested that East Germany, West Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia could participate in the atom-free zone without severing their connections with existing military pacts.

December 16th 1957: Polish Foreign Minister Rapacki, enlarging on his original plan, told the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Polish Parliament: "Poland is interested in the most effective control (on this atom-free zone) so that all the countries should possess a maximum of certainty and a feeling of safety."

December 21st 1957: The Supreme Soviet passed a seven point peace resolution, one of the main points of which read as follows:

"The Soviet Union, USA and Britain should negotiate an agreement, in cooperation with the countries concerned, not to station atomic weapons on the territory of Germany, both East and West, Poland and Czechoslovakia, thus establishing a zone free of such destructive weapons in Central Europe."

January 9th 1957: Soviet Prime Minister Bulganin repeated the wil-

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(Map from "Neues Deutschland" Berlin)

Electing Lay Judges

By Professor F. Niethammer, Director, German Law Academy

(Cases in the courts of Democratic Germany are tried by one professional judge and two elected lay justices. The lay justices have the right to see all files of the case, to interrogate witnesses, to assist in the summing-up and to help decide on sentences.)

When our lay justices were elected for the first time by direct election about three years ago, I went to one of the election meetings, where I met two West German citizens who had been invited to attend. They were impressed. They thought this was a practical and really democratic way of electing lay justices; but they also thought that the expenses attached to the election of such large numbers were out of proportion to their value.

The next elections of lay justices are to take place this year between February 15th and March 15th. The big majority of them will again be elected by the people in open meetings. So that the doubts expressed by the two West German guests might well be repeated.

There are in the German Democratic Republic about 900 professional judges. But the professsional judges alone are not of great importance; they can only in isolated cases exercise their judicial authority without the cooperation of lay justices, for according to our constitutional law, the courts of first instance and the senates are since 1952 composed of a professional judge as chairman and two lay justices as co-workers with absolutely equal rights.

Each lay justice places himself entirely at the disposal of his court for 14 days in each year. Each judge has the assistance of the same two lay justices during this period. Apart from an insignificant number of exceptions, no criminal or civil court case can be tried without lay justices. It makes no difference whether the case has to do with minor theft, a serious economic offence, murder, a divorce suit, prosecution for debt or other small offence — the decision always rests with the two lay justices and a professional judge.

Thus nine hundred professional judges need the help of about 23,000 pairs of lay justices to do the work effectively. But in order to cover absence due to illness or other causes it is necessary to elect about 50,000 lay justices in all, so as to assure the proper functioning of our courts. Direct election of 50,000 persons does actually involve considerable expenditure of time and money. And an even greater expenditure is involved in the interruption of the regular work of about 2,000 persons at one time for fourteen days every year, so that they can devote themselves entirely to their work in the courts.

The (West German) Federal Republic does not expend so much. Its constitutional law, a relic of Kaiser Wilhelm's day, recognises the cooperation of lay justices (and of juries) only for minor criminal court cases. Professional judges decide in all civil cases, property and family disputes, divorce cases and so on. The number of lay justices can thus be kept very low, and since the abolition of a number of progressive provincial laws passed soon after the end of the war, lay justices are all appointed — not elected — in West Germany again.

Our constitutional law requires that the legal practice of our courts shall help the cause of socialism, German unity and peace; one of the tasks of our courts is to educate citizens in their professional and personal lives to a responsible attitude and to conscientious observance of the law.

It would be a contradiction of the basic principles of socialist democracy if the fulfillment of these tasks were left solely to state officials — however well-proven or experienced they may be — and for the people to have no part in it. The experience and political will of the working people must find expression in legal practice too. And this is only possible if the people's representatives can have a direct influence upon it, and if they are directly elected by the people.

The cooperation of lay justices must have a real effect; that is why each judge is allotted two lay justices, so that they can, if necessary, over-rule the professional judge. Lay justices must be judges in fact, and not merely appendages of the court, as they are in West Germany. They prepare for trials in the same way as the chairman; they conduct trials together with him, and have the same opportunities as he to put questions. The sentence is passed after consultation between all three and they prepare the summing-up together.

West German lay justices do not have access to all the evidence and they are in all cases subordinate to professional judges.

The great majority of the thousands of lay justices who are now completing their terms of office in East Germany have fully understood their responsibility; they have taken the job very seriously and have by no means always been comfortable assistants, even though details of arguments were not generally made public.

As I explained to the two West German visitors three years ago, the expenditure involved in direct election of so many thousands of lay justices is justified, for it guarantees a legal practice which gives expression to the people's experience and is understood by the people.

(Abridged from "Weltbuehne", East Berlin, January 8th 1958)

(cont. from previous page)

lingness of the Soviet Union to cooperate in the establishment of an atom-free zone. In a letter addressed to all NATO states, Bulganin stated: "The Soviet Union supports the Polish proposal, and would be ready to accept, together with the Governments of USA, Britain and France, the necessary committments."

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The proposals made by the Polish Foreign Minister are clear, simple and logical. If put into effect they would establish a broad band of territory, stretching about one thousand miles from east to west in the centre of Europe, in which nuclear weapons would be banned. The proposal has already received the whole-hearted support of three of the four states involved: Poland, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic. It has been welcomed by the West German Social Democrats, by the British Labour movement (London "Tribune" described it as "the idea which has captured the imagination of Europe), and by such conservative organs as the "Times", London.

The pressure of public opinion in all western countries implicated can force their governments to make the plan reality.

EAST GERMAN TV

Five Years Old — Going Strong

East German TV, which celebrated its fifth birthday in December 1957, is rapidly getting over its infantile disorders and emerging as an important factor in the life of the country. When regular transmissions started on December 21st 1952, there were just 75 receivers, with post-card sized screens, in use in Berlin, the only part of the Republic where the transmissions could be received.

Today there are nearly 150,000 receivers in use, and the nine transmitters of the TV service cover almost the whole of the country. Remaining "dead areas" will be serviced in the very near future. At present about 2000 new viewers register their sets every week, and the figure would be considerably higher if the radio works could produce a larger number of sets. As it is there are long waiting lists of people who want to get a set.

Main bottle-neck in set production at present is the shortage of cathode-tubes, particularly in larger sizes, and to get round this difficulty one of the manufacturing firms is producing sets which are at present equipped with 14 inch screens, which can be easily removed and replaced by 17 inch screens as soon as these become available. One of these convertible sets is shown in the picture of a quiz show reproduced on this page.

Although only 150,000 sets are in use today, the regular viewing public is estimated at well over 600,000, and for peak events it rises to over one million. The ratio of viewers to sets is particularly high in the country districts: one of the first things which agricultural cooperatives do after their formation is to buy the biggest TV set they can get their hands on, and these sets have become a focal point for farmers and peasants, so that each small screen is often besieged by dozens of viewers. With increasing prosperity in the countryside more and more cooperative farmers and individual farmers are buying their own sets.

Television in the German Democratic Republic works on the 625-line system, which is used throughout East and West Europe, with the exception of Britain and France. This means that the East German transmissions can be received by viewers in frontier areas of neighbouring countries: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Denmark and South Sweden, and of course in large areas of West Germany. The popularity of the transmissions is shown by the fact that the East German television programmes are printed in most West German radio papers, and in some Danish and Swedish papers.

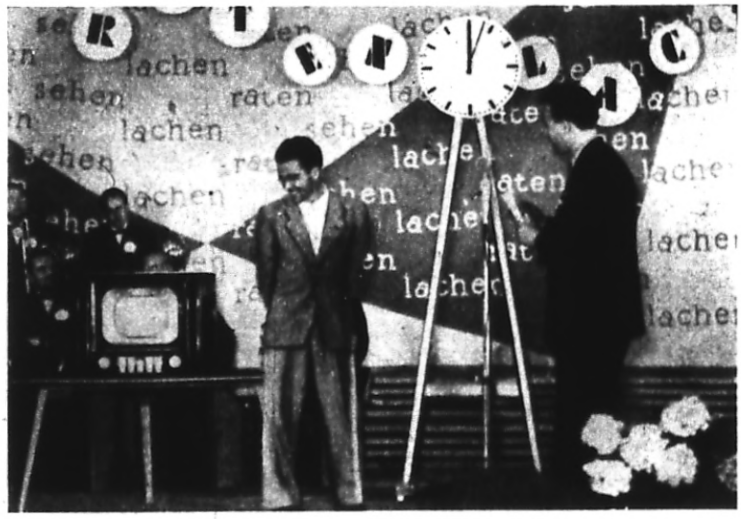
East Europe has so far lagged behind West Europe in the construction of an international TV network (all West European television countries have been linked for some time by the Eurovision network) but rapid steps are now being taken to overcome the lag. Prague and Berlin are already linked and a recent extension of this link made it possible for viewers in Budapest and in Kattowice in Poland to join in the direct reception of a special children's programme from East Berlin. East German television technicians are cautious about predicting exact dates for extending the link, but "within five years" they predict a direct tie-up between Berlin and Moscow, via Kiev. In the meantimehere is a large-scale exchange of film material between the socialist countries.

The prospect of a direct Moscow—Berlin link opens up exciting prospects for viewers in West European countries and in Britain, since completion of this link will mean that there is no technical obstacle in the way of direct reception in London of football matches, operas or ballets from the Soviet capital. The only remaining obstacle would be the political obstacle of cooperation between the East European network coming into East Berlin, and the West European network coming into West Berlin.

The fact that there is no technical obstacle to cooperation between these two systems has already been shown: British viewers a month or two ago were able to watch a boxing match in Prague, thanks to the cooperation of the East German TV authorities, and East German viewers were able to watch an athletics contest in London, thanks to the cooperation of the West German TV network.

The technicians have done their job: the rest is up to the politicians.

Syrian cartoonist Mazhar Shamma draws on a glass screen for TV viewers



"Shall I take a chance?" wonders this competitor in popular TV "Double or Quits" Quiz Programme

BRITISH EXPERT LOOKS AT EAST GERMAN THEATRES

By Joan Becker

It is interesting, and sometimes a little startling, to hear what visitors think about various aspects of life in East Germany. We have got used to hearing praise of the East German theatre and acting and the East German government's generous support of it.

So when I heard Joan Littlewood, London Theatre Workshop producer, expressing some pretty sharp criticisms I was at first a little taken aback; but on thinking it over I feel there is a good deal of truth in what she said.

Mrs. Littlewood, who spent several weeks here producing Ewan McColl's play "Operation Olive Branch", which had its premiere at the Maxim Gorki Theatre on December 22nd, certainly holds no brief for British polite theatre, and what she said about East German theatre was not a comparison, but rather criticism of failings which she felt should be overcome in a socialist theatre.

Her main criticism was that too few new plays, dealing with urgent problems of our own times, are getting into our theatres. She suggested one of the probable reasons for this, too; that producers expect finished plays to fall into their hands. Her own experience with the Theatre Workshop has been that there are numbers of people who can provide raw manuscripts full of interesting material, jokes, dramatic situations and so on, which can be licked into shape by producers working with their companies.

But to construct good plays from raw material like this actors and producers have to get out of the theatre more. She told us, for instance, about four plays — two by building workers, one by a Scottish working girl and one by a railwayman — on which the Theatre Workshop has worked; the company spent a great deal of time with the workers in these branches, learnt all about their lives and their way of thinking at first hand, tried out scenes on them and so on — not expecting to find everything ready made in their lines.

I must confess I have no idea to what extent East German actors do this sort of thing, but imagine very little, since for one thing, they act in comparatively few contemporary plays and for another, they are in the habit of depending largely on the producer.

It was Mrs. Littlewood's impression, too, that the producer is regarded as a minor god here. She felt that the Maxim Gorki Theatre company did not know what to make of her at first; they seemed to be waiting all the time for her to tell them what to do.

But they soon got the idea that she really expects her company to help create their own characters on the stage. She had nothing but praise for East German actors, by the way; she praised their technical and vocal qualities and was convinced that, given inspiring new material, they could do wonders with it. She was also impressed by the truly collective way in which they work, and how willing they are to put in long hours at rehearsals.

Another reason for the lack of contemporary plays lies, perhaps, in what Mrs. Littlewood rather drastically calls the "fundamental laziness of all actors". The call for new contemporary plays is, after all, not so very loud here yet. And certainly not loud enough to force actors and producers into really strenuous efforts to find new plays.

And there is some excuse for this. I expect there are many many thousands of people in East Germany — and of course not only in East Germany — who, like myself, were prevented from going to the theatre for years. They have a great deal to catch up on and a really urgent need for contemporary plays will only make itself felt when more people have seen everything there is to see.

East German theatre audiences are very largely season ticket holders. Factory workers go regularly in large groups and country people think nothing of taking long bus journeys to the nearest theatre and getting home in the small hours of the morning. Many of these are people who would never have dreamt of going to the theatre a few years ago, and they still get fun from the mere atmosphere of it — even when it is a bit plushy for the more sophisticated — putting on their best clothes and so on, so that they are often not over-critical of the play itself.

There is also something to be said for giving people a glimpse of past drama, especially people who knew nothing about the theatre before. But this is not to say that it might not be better, if the plays were there, to do the thing the other way round — first give people good modern plays about the real problems of our own times, and then introduce them to past achievements.

One interesting point came out here in the press conference with Mrs. Littlewood following the opening night; pressing problems in one country are not always so pressing in another. Mrs. Littlewood was telling about the kind of plays the Theatre Workshop puts on in London — classic and modern — and in passing she mentioned that the theatre puts on modern classical plays insofar as they deal with problems which are still significant. As an example she said that they had produced Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People", but not "The Doll's House" because the problem here is no longer an urgent one in England.

"The Doll's House" has been produced quite recently in East Berlin, because paradoxically enough, in a country where the economic fact of "equal pay for equal work" is really a fact, women are still inwardly much less independent than ordinary Englishwomen, so that this play — and quite recently "A Day To Myself", by Otto Fischer, which is now in the Maxim Gorki Theatre repertoire — are more "modern" in the German Democratic Republic than in England.

But to return to "Operation Olive Branch" — one thing which its production has proved is that it is a real gamble to produce modern topical plays — especially comedies — in foreign countries. One eminent East Berlin critic took particular exception to what is in English the wittiest and cleverest scene in it — because he considered it boring and untrue. There are some jokes which simply do not bear translation.

Listening to this critic discoursing on whether it is permissible to make use of a basic idea corresponding to the needs of another age in order to put across ideas belonging to our own times, I quite forgot we were really talking about a satirical comedy, until Mrs. Littlewood murmured that the whole thing was perhaps being taken a little too seriously — she had tried to make people laugh. The play itself had been put on in London some years ago, sandwiched in between a very serious piece about the danger of

atomic warfare and followed by an equally serious play. She also felt that Ewan McColl did genuine justice to the essence of Aristophanes' idea — to show up the ridiculousness of the 'old men'. A comedy could only show up this side of the problem and could not attempt to deal with its more sinister aspects.

Mrs Littlewood had a number of other criticisms of East German theatre, gathered during her stay in East Berlin, such as the conventional productions of Shakespeare, a tendency to imitate Bert Brecht in the Berliner Ensemble theatre company, which she feels will not prove helpful in the long run. As she rather drastically put it, the theatre must look forward; Bertolt Brecht and Friedrich Wolf were the heroes of the progressive theatre in England during the 1930's; but they were the heroes of their own times. We must find new heroes for our times.

I am pleased to add, however, that one thing did impress Mrs. Littlewood — the workshops. She felt that a producer could ask for anything and get it, so well are they equipped and staffed. And she did allow herself one direct comparison, between the social position of actors in England and in East Germany. East Germany wins out completely here. Whereas an actor in England is nobody in particular, she had the clear impression that East German actors have an established amd important place in society, with definite tasks to fulfil.

W. GERMANY FALSIFIES HISTORY

T. U. Organ Criticises Papers, Films

History is constantly falsified in West German newspapers, films and publicity, and this is having a "devastating effect" on young people, the "Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung", organ of the West German Teachers' Union, stated on November 15th 1957.

Dr. Arno Kloenne, prominent member of the union, cited the following as the most typical falsifications:

1. The period before 1914 is unjustifiably glorified; the popular struggle for social and political rights and the low level of culture are ignored.

2. The pre-Hitler Weimar Republic is generally treated with scorn. The fact is generally ignored that not only the nazi party was to blame for the destruction of democracy, but also the Wehrmacht, nationalists and militarist organisations.

3. The fascist period in Germany is "prettied up", and the terror against antifascists is either ignored or allegedly confined to "isolated cases".

4. The international machinations of nazism before the outbreak of World War Two, such as Hitler's intervention in Spain, are unjustifiably presented as "logical defence manoeuvres against Bolshevism."

5. The outbreak of war in 1939 is interpreted as a stroke of fate, not as a criminal act of the national socialist leadership. The equally criminal war against the Soviet Union is presented as a "crusade for the Western world".

"In particular", Dr. Kloenne writes, "no mention is made of the fact that a large proportion of high military officers, although they occasionally criticised strategic mistakes made by Hitler, were by no means opposed to the principles underlying national socialist policy. This was also true of the big German industrialists."

6. The conduct and events of the war are presented in an apparently objective way, but without mentioning that the "lost victories" served a criminal caused.

7. The defeat of 1945 is presented as the real disaster to Germany. The fact that the capitulation also meant liberation from fascism is ignored.

8. Speaking of the post-war period, Dr. Kloenne criticises the tendency to pass over in silence "the admirable efforts of those who, immediately after 1945, helped to revive German democracy from within and from without."

"You Must Print Nazi Article" — W. German Court Decision

A West German court has ruled that a printer is obliged to carry out orders, even if this means printing a neo-nazi propaganda article.

Here are the facts of the case, as given in the December 1957 number of "Der Journalist", magazine of the West German Journalists' Federation:

"The Coburg Labour Court has rejected the appeal made by printworker Helmut Schammberger against a Coburg publishing house, and has confirmed the legality of his sacking without notice. Schammberger had refused to help in the printing of the nazi periodical 'Nation Europa', printed in the publishing house, since editor Arthur Ehrhardt had written an article stating that anyone who was in a concentration camp in Hitler's Reich was himself responsible for his fate. Schammberger based his refusal on the fact that his cousin had been confined in a concentration camp. The court ruled that Schammberger was obliged to obey the orders of his superiors, regardless of the contents of the magazine, since he was not in any way responsible for these contents."

Win a New Reader

Fill in the name and address of a friend, work-mate or acquaintance on the form below, and send it to

Democratic German Report
Friedrichstrasse 167/III
Berlin W 8, Germany

We shall be pleased to mail sample copies of the paper to him or her.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Mr. Joseph Wechsberg, an American writer of Czech origin, used to turn out a steady stream of light and amusing articles mainly about life in Central Europe between the wars. One of his jobs at that time was that of a paid claquer in the Vienna Opera House. If you have never met the word before I should perhaps explain that a claquer is a man who is paid by an opera star to let loose a storm of applause at the right points in the opera. The storm is louder or softer in strict accordance to the sum paid.

Nowadays, Mr. Wechsberg seems to have become a claquer in the cold war opera. That is the only conclusion I can think of after reading an article which he wrote, in his usual smooth style, for the "New Yorker", humourous magazine appealing mainly to well-heeled New Yorkers. I say well-heeled, since one of the advertisements which flanks Mr. Wechsberg's cold war article in the issue for November 9th 1957 advertises "a vicuna robe for a gentleman to slip into on wintry mornings" for the very reasonable price of only $ 750.

Smooth Flow

In his article, Mr. Wechsberg describes, with his usual smooth flow of words, his adventures during a trip through East Germany to Berlin. Of course, thousands of West Germans and West Berliners make this trip daily, as well as hundreds of Britons; Americans and what have you's, but Mr. Wechsberg sets out to make his readers' blood curdle, despite their vicuna robes, and makes the journey sound as dangerous as Sir Edmund Hillary's dash for the South Pole.

For instance, there is his story of how he decided to stop for a cup of coffee during his car drive through East German territory on his way to Berlin. He drew up in front of a roadside cafe and "had hardly edged my way out from under the wheel when two inhospitable policemen on bicycles showed up from nowhere in particular and dismounted. So I got right in again and drove on."

Unfortunately Mr. Wechsberg leaves a lot of questions open. Had the policemen been pedalling madly on their bicycles behind Mr. Wechsberg's Buick, waiting for him to draw up? Or had they perhaps been waiting all the time behind the cafe, ready to ambush our intrepid explorer? I am afraid I shall never get the answers to these pressing questions.

But our traveller escaped from the sinister policemen, who were probably just dropping in for a peaceful glass of beer, and hurried on to Berlin.

In East Berlin, Mr. Wechsberg saw all sorts of surprising things. His article is long, so I only have room for a few of the highlights. Take this, for instance:

"In East Berlin ... the majority of men have finally had to throw away their pre-war suits (they were getting pretty threadbare three years ago, but the best-dressed men were still wearing them), and have replaced them with suits made of a flimsy fabric that smells like a wet dog."

This is a very pretty piece of fantasy. Let us leave aside the story of the pre-war suits (how many men have changed so little in figure in the past fifteen to twenty years that they can still wear suits that old?), and look at the "flimsy fabric" part of the story. Admittedly, the general run of men's suitings in East Germany is not up to British or American standards, owing to the difficulty of getting enough wool, but they are fair enough, for all that. Just as an example, I was lunching at the Constitutional Club in London last summer with my one and only rich relative. Far from smelling a wet dog, the relative fingered the cloth, and said "surely you can't get a suit like **that** in East Germany". But I had, right off the hook.

But back again to Mr. Wechsberg, and his most outrageous story. He went to visit the State Opera in East Berlin of course, even though there is no paid claque there, and he actually had to buy a ticket to get in. Let me quote him:

"When the lights came on after the first act, there was perfunctory applause, and then the audience rose nearly as one man and stampeded to the exits. I went along and was swept downstairs to a luxurious basement buffet — more marble, marble, marble — where I soon discovered the reason for the big rush: two long counters stacked high with sausage sandwiches, which were being sold to one and all ... The opera buffet, I learned later, is the only place in East Germany where anybody can buy food without a ration card or an identity card. The sandwiches were gone in no time; some people bought five or six. Clearly, the enthusiasm of many of the operagoers for Wurstbrote was considerably greater than their enthusiasm for Puccini."

I am not generally at a loss for words, but this paragraph left me gasping for breath. So the opera buffet is the only place in East Germany where you can buy food without a ration card! It is now clear to me that I must be living somewhere else, and not in East Germany. Basic quantities of meat, fats and sugar are still sold on ration cards at subsidised prices, it is true, but everything else has been off the ration and freely available for six years in some tens of thousands of shops and restaurants all over the Democratic Republic. The correct version of Mr. Wechsberg's prize sentence reads as follows: "The opera buffet is the only place in East Germany where anybody can buy food without a ration card, with the exception of about one hundred thousand other places."

Stampede Story

In the unlikely event that Mr. Wechsberg is interested in the true explanation for the stampede to the opera buffet (it is in fact a stampede, similar to the stampede to the bar in most London theatres), this is that firstly all Germans, whether from East or West, love to eat sandwiches and hot sausages in the interval. A second, and very important factor, is that West Berliners go in large numbers to the East Berlin opera because of the high standard of the performances. Before going, the canny ones buy a handful of East German marks at a depreciated rate on the West German "free market", and in the interval take a snack supper at the opera buffet, since this ruse means that they are getting the food for less than half the price they would pay for it in West Berlin. If Mr. Wechsberg had taken the trouble to find out, he would have discovered that the men and women wolfing down five or six sandwiches were mainly West Berliners having the cheapest supper they could get anywhere in Berlin.

But enough of our intrepid traveller's fantasies. His article appears in the "New Yorker" under the title "Our Far-Flung Correspondents". They didn't fling this one far enough, for my taste.

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